Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A guiding aid for an instrument to be advanced within a vascular system comprising:

a flexible shapeable shaft including:

a distal tip;

a first bent section having a first curvature K_1;

a second bent section proximal the first bent section, having a second curvature K_2, wherein the radius of the first curvature K_1 of said first bent section is smaller than the radius of the second curvature K_2 of said second bent section;

a first axis extending from the distal tip of the guiding aid along a straight line in the direction in which the distal tip of the guiding aid is pointing;

a straight intermediate section between the first and second bent sections, with a second axis along the straight intermediate section;

a straight proximal section proximal the second bent section with a third axis along the straight proximal section; and

an angle α_1 between the first axis and the second axis and an angle α_2 between the second axis and the third axis;

with said bent sections of said shaft having the same sign of curvature and being located substantially in the same plane;

wherein both α_1 and α_2 are obtuse angles.

2. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein the shaft comprises a total of two bent sections.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, further comprising a straight end section distal of the first bent section, wherein the first axis extends down the center of the straight end section.

6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein said first obtuse angle (α_1) and second obtuse angle (α_2) are between 120° and 150°.

9. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein said bent sections are substantially in the shape of a circular arc.

10. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein said shaft is tapered toward its distal end.

11. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein a helically wound spring is located around at least a part of said shaft.

12. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 11, wherein said helically wound spring comprises a proximal and a distal end, wherein the distal end of the spring is provided with a rounded terminal element.

13. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein said shaft is made of a material having superelastic characteristics.

14. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 13, wherein said shaft is made of superelastic nitinol.

15. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein radiopaque means are provided in the region of said distal tip of said shaft.

16. (Previously Presented) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein the total bend in the shaft is between 60° and 120°.

17. (New) The guiding aid of claim 1, wherein the radius of the first curvature K_1 is about 3 mm and the radius of the second curvature K_2 is about 8 mm.

18. (New) A guiding aid for an instrument to be advanced within a vascular system comprising:

a flexible shapeable core wire;

a distal tip;

a first bent section having a first curvature K_1;

a second bent section proximal the first bent section, having a second curvature K_2;

a first axis extending from the distal tip of the guiding aid along a straight line in the direction in which the distal tip of the guiding aid is pointing;

a straight intermediate section between the first and second bent sections, with a second axis along the straight intermediate section;

a straight proximal section proximal the second bent section with a third axis along the straight proximal section; and

an angle α_1 between the first axis and the second axis and an angle α_2 between the second axis and the third axis.

19. (New) The guiding aid of claim 18, wherein the radius of the first curvature K_1 is smaller than the radius of the second curvature K_2.

20. (New) The guiding aid of claim 19, wherein both α_1 and α_2 are obtuse angles.

21. (New) The guiding aid of claim 19, wherein the core wire comprises a material having superelastic characteristics.

22. (New) A guiding aid for an instrument to be advanced within a vascular system comprising:

a flexible shapeable shaft including a material having superelastic characteristics;

a distal tip;

a first bent section having a first curvature K_1;

a second bent section proximal the first bent section, having a second curvature K_2, wherein the radius of the first curvature K_1 of said first bent section is smaller than the radius of the second curvature K_2 of said second bent section;

a first axis extending from the distal tip of the guiding aid along a straight line in the direction in which the distal tip of the guiding aid is pointing;

a straight intermediate section between the first and second bent sections, with a second axis along the straight intermediate section;

a straight proximal section proximal the second bent section with a third axis along the straight proximal section; and

an angle α_1 between the first axis and the second axis and an angle α_2 between the second axis and the third axis;

with said bent sections of said shaft having the same sign of curvature and being located substantially in the same plane;

wherein both α_1 and α_2 are obtuse angles.